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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Research Service
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MEXICAN FRUIT FLY CONTROL

NATURE OF THE PEST

873368

The Mexican fruit fly is a yellowish-brown fly about the size of a housefly with bands on the wings also in yellow and brown. The adult flies live several months and can withstand limited exposure to freezing temperatures. The eggs are deposited in mature fruit and the larva in the course of their development destroy it.

CROPS AFFECTED

The pest principally attacks oranges and grapefruit. It also attacks peaches, apples, pear, plums, quinces, apricots, and avocados.

DAMAGE AND ESTIMATED LOSSES

The actual damage to fruit in the United States has been extremely light due to control measures, lack of multiple hosts in the infested area of Texas, and more recently a reduced supply of fruit due to freezes in 1949 and 1951. In the generally infested areas of Mexico extensive damage occurs, particularly in mangoes, one of their important crops. It is estimated that if this pest became established in California, Florida, and other heavy producing areas the annual damage could be close to 50 million dollars.

CONTROL PROGRAM

Mexican fruit fly infestation in the United States is confined to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas. It is believed to migrate into that area annually from native host plants in northeastern Mexico. Recently incipient outbreaks have occurred in Tijuana and Mexicali immediately adjacent to the California fruit industry. The work in Texas has primarily involved enforcement of quarantine regulations to prevent movement of infested products to pest-free areas. The presence of the pest near the California line has resulted in formulation of plans to eradicate these infestations before they become established.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Authority for this program is contained in the Plant Quarantine Act of 1912, as amended (7 U.S.C. 151-167) and the Organic Act of 1944, as amended (7 U.S.C. 147a).

CONTROL COSTS: Breakdown of costs by states combined with Citrus Blackfly

July 7, 1954

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